N° 76. SATURDAY, *July* 15, 1786.

THIS day's Paper I devote to correſpondents. The firſt of the following letters I was particularly deſirous to inſert ſoon, as its ſubject is of that tranſient kind which might ſuffer from delay. In dreſs, as well as in character, there is often, in theſe times of change, "the *Cynthia* of the minute."

To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

SIR, *Edinburgh, July* 6, 1786.

I Underſtand that gentlemen who formerly held the ſame ſort of office which you now exerciſe among us, were in uſe to appoint certain deputies, to whom they committed particular departments. As you, Sir, ſeem now to be ſo well eſtabliſhed in yours, that you may poſſibly think of following their example, I make bold to ſolicit an appointment, or, failing of that, your patronage at leaſt to an undertaking, of which this town ſeems to ſtand much in need, and for which I flatter myſelf I am tolerably well qualified.

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One of your extenſive obſervation, Mr. Lounger, muſt have remarked how defective we are in point of general or early information in dreſs, and how long it is before we accommodate ourſelves univerſally to that perfect ſtandard which the metropolis of England affords. We are often miſerably in the rear of the faſhion; and, except one or two favoured ladies, who have been accidentally in London, the bulk of our fine women don't get into the mode till it is quite upon the wane among our ſouthern neighbours. The *Oſtrich* head did not make its appearance here till half a ſeaſon after it had been worn in London. The other end of the oſtrich was ſtill later of reaching us. That was indeed partly owing to an accident; the firſt ſet (as it is a bulky article) was coming down by ſea in a ſhip that was wrecked, and a friend of mine, who had the merit of the firſt commiſſion, loſt conſiderably in bottomry on the veſſel. At this very moment I ſee paſs my door a great many Brimſtone ribbons, though it is two months ſince my letters from London informed me they were quite out there. As long ago as the *Commemoration*, there were none but *Celeſtials* preſent, not a ſingle *Brimſtone* in the Abbey.

This inconvenience, Sir, might eaſily be remedied by a ſpeedier communication of intelligence

gence between the capitals of England and of Scotland, more eſpecially if a public appointment were made of ſome perſon from whom ſuch intelligence could here be obtained, and who ſhould be anſwerable for its authenticity. 'Tis for this office, Mr. Lounger, I venture to propoſe myſelf. I have been at a good deal of pains, Sir, to eſtabliſh ſuch a correſpondence at London, and even at Paris, as I truſt will enable me to ſupply myſelf, not only with intelligence, but with *models* of every article of Dreſs, as ſoon as it grows into confirmed faſhion; and I will take care to exhibit at certain ſtated ſeaſons a ſet of *Poupées*, which I flatter myſelf will convey from my ſhop-window a perfect idea of the reigning dreſs and undreſs of the faſhionable world. At preſent, the little figures which are ſtationed there are looked on merely as toys for children; but I hereby give notice, that, with your leave, Mr. Lounger, I ſhall, on the firſt day of the enſuing race-week, convert them to a more dignified as well as a more uſeful purpoſe; that they will then repreſent, on one ſide of my window, a ſet of faſhionably dreſſed gentlemen, and on the other a party of faſhionably dreſſed ladies.

There never, I imagine, Sir, was a period when ſuch a ſtandard was of ſo much importance

ance in this country. The proportion of the value of drefs to that of the wearer, particularly in the Fair Sex, is wonderfully increafed of late years in Edinburgh. Of the firft I think I am a tolerably good judge, and can eftimate, I believe, within a few fhillings (fuppofing the underworks to be of the ordinary materials), the value of any lady's apparel. Of the value of the lady herfelf I do not pretend to be a judge: in fome inftances within my little experience, I have obferved the eftimate to differ confiderably at two different periods, as it happened to be made by the lover or the hufband; at the firft, they bore a premium, as we fay in bufinefs; at the latter, there was rather a difcount. But taking things at an average, I am told, our mothers and grandmothers were as precious in themfelves as our wives and daughters. But as for their covering, there is, in all ranks, a great increafe of coft, even in my time: for though the old *Points* and *Brocades* came high at firft, they went through generations, like an entailed eftate: our drefs has as much the advantage in variety as in elegance; it does not outlaft a lady's fancy. 'Twas but t'other morning I fold fome of my *Bloom of Rofes* to the wife of a grocer of my acquaintance, who looked at fome of my toys from beneath a bonnet that muft have ftood her in a couple of guineas at the leaft; yet were fhe

ſhe to be ſet up to auction—but I wiſh to avoid all perſonal reflections, Mr. Lounger.

You, Sir, who underſtand ſuch ſubjects, might perhaps wiſh to correct the diſproportion between apparel and ſtation; between the gaudineſs of dreſs, and the age and character of the wearer: I only pretend to regulate it according to the mode, or perhaps a little according to the complexion. In both I ſee the greateſt miſtakes at preſent. There is a lamentable neglect among us of all propriety in that matter. We are ill informed even of the names of the articles we wear. People come to years of diſcretion ſcarce know the difference between a plain Hat and a *Lunardi*; and I have heard a lady, who I was told had a very good education, miſtake a *Parachute* for a *Fitzherbert*.

Beſides the knowledge of dreſs in the abſtract, Mr. Lounger, there is another branch of inſtruction, which lies, if I may preſume to ſay ſo, in the middle between your province and mine, that is, the art of making the moſt of one's ſelf in one's dreſs, after one has got it on. I believe, Sir, I can find an aſſiſtant who will undertake this department; who can teach the ladies the ſmart toſs ſuitable to the new-faſhioned turned-up hat, the languiſh of eye that is to be practiſed under the curtain of the *Lunardi*, and the hoydeniſh roll that becomes the *Laitiere*; and

and in the ſame way, who will ſhew the gentlemen the lolling air that ſuits the open waiſtcoat and ſlender ſwitch, and the fierce one that accords with the knotted neckcloth and ſhort thick bludgeon. In the mean time, however, I ſhall content myſelf with exhibiting my figures in a quiet ſtate: if I meet with ſuitable encouragement, I may, with my friend's aſſiſtance, turn them into *Automata*, and teach them to go through their exerciſe after the moſt approved method.

I have the honour to be, with great reſpect,
your moſt obedient and moſt humble ſervant,
W. JENKIN.

I own I was a little ſurpriſed at the ſtyle of Mr. Jenkin's letter, till, turning over the leaf, I found a poſtſcript, in which (after urging a plea of favour on account of the late impoſition of the perfumery-tax, which was to take place the very day his letter is dated) he candidly acknowledges, that the ſubſtance only of that letter is his own, but that his propoſal was put into ſhape by a neighbour and cuſtomer of his. I am perfectly ſatisfied of the uſefulneſs of his plan; and, as far as I may aſſume any juriſdiction in the matter, am extremely willing to inveſt him with the appointment in queſtion, provided the gentleman who wrote his letter continues to act as his ſecretary.

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As to his proposal of teaching young Ladies and Gentlemen the *exercise* of dress, I shall take time to consider of it. At present I am rather inclined to believe it unnecessary. I think he does my countrymen and countrywomen injustice in supposing them to require instruction in that particular. On some late field-days, or rather field-evenings, at which I happened to be present, I have seen some of them go through their evolutions in a very masterly and mistressly manner.

The second letter was left at my Editor's, as the shop-boy informed Mr. Creech, by a short round-faced gentleman, who seemed, when he gave it in, to be very much out of humour.

To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

SIR,

I Can't help complaining to you of a grievance which I do not remember to have seen taken notice of, at least not exactly in the way it affects me, in any treatise on Conversation.

Here in the coffeehouse I frequent (and you, for aught I know, may have often witnessed the thing in your proper person) is one Mr. *Glib*, who is the greatest *questioner* I ever met

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with in the whole courſe of my life. This, however, though plague enough of itſelf, is but half the injury of which we have to complain from him. Mr. Glib, Sir, not content with the queſtion, always takes the anſwer upon him likewiſe; ſo that it is impoſſible to get in a word. I ſhall illuſtrate my meaning by giving you, *verbatim*, his converſation this morning. He came in wiping his forehead, and, as I hoped, out of breath; but he was ſcarcely ſeated when he began as uſual: "Mercy on us! "how hot it is! Boy, fetch me a glaſs of Port "and water. Dr. *Phlogiſton*, did you obſerve "what the thermometer ſtood at this morning? "Mine was at 76 in the ſhade.—Well, this has "cleared my throat of the duſt a little.—What "a duſt there is in the New Town! Gentle-"men, were any of you in Prince's Street ſince "breakfaſt? I went to call on a friend who lives "at the farther ſide of the Square, and I had "like to have been ſmother'd.—Sir John, how "were you entertain'd at the play laſt night? "*Mrs. Pope*'s playing was admirable. Were "not you amaz'd at the thinneſs of the houſe? "But faſhion, not taſte, rules every thing. "Give the women but a crowd within, and a "ſqueeze at the door, and they don't care a "pin for the excellence of the entertainment.— "Captain *Paragraph*, how long is it ſince the

"poſt

"post came in? I got my paper about an hour "ago.—When is it thought Parliament will "rise? I have a letter that says the 12th.—— "Mr. *M'Blubber*, you are a Highlander, what "is your opinion of those encouragements to "the fishery? I have no great notion of build- "ing towns; find the birds, say I, and they "will find nests for themselves.—Mr. *Rupee* "(you have been in India), what do you say to "this impeachment? I am inclined to think it "will come to nothing.—Pray, what is the "exact definition of a *bulse?* I understand it to "be a package for diamonds, as a *rouleau* is for "guineas.—Ha! is not that Mr. Hazard walk- "ing yonder, who came yesterday from Lon- "don? Yes it is, I know him by his gait.— "Sir, is my cane any where near you? Oh! "yes, I left it in the corner of the box.—Boy, "how much did I owe the house since yester- "day? Eighteen-pence. Here it is."

Now, Mr. Lounger, you must be satisfied what an aggravated offence this way of talking of Mr. Glib's is, against other people who wish to have some share in the conversation. The most unconscionable querists, if they keep within their own department, are contented with half the talk of the company: Mr. Glib cuts it in two, and very modestly helps himself to both pieces. When he has set the fancy agog, and

one's tongue is juſt ready to give it vent, pop, he comes between one and the game he has ſtarted, and takes the word out of one's mouth. Do write a few lines, Sir, to let Mr. Glib know how unreaſonable and how ridiculous his behaviour is; 'tis as if one ſhould play at *ſhuttlecock* alone, or take a game at *piquet*, one's right-hand againſt one's left, or ſit down with three *dead men* at *whiſt*.—I ſhould never have done, were I to ſay all I think of its abſurdity.

I am a married man, Mr. Lounger, and have a wife and three grown up daughters at home. I am a pretty conſtant frequenter of the coffee-houſe, where I go to have the pleaſure of a little converſation; but if Mr. Glib is to come there every morning as he does at preſent, never to have done aſking queſtions, and never to allow any body but himſelf to anſwer them, I may juſt as well ſtay at home.

Yours, &c.

GABRIEL GOSSIP.

Before I ſtir further in this matter, Mr. Goſſip will be kind enough to inform me, whether it would ſatisfy him, if Mr. Glib were allowed to aſk queſtions, and he, Mr. Goſſip, to anſwer them, for all the reſt of the coffeehouſe.

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